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Memorandum for: RECORD

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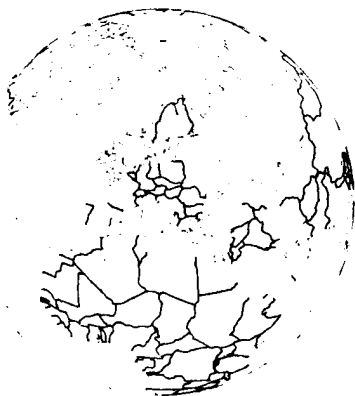
Iberia-Aegean Branch, EURA/WE for
the DDI in response to his query about the
possible Turkish reaction to a meeting
between the President and the Armenian
Apostolic leader Karekin II.

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EURA

Office of European Analysis

EUR M 83-10155

Memorandum for: DDI

The attached memorandum is our response to your query about the possible Turkish reaction to a meeting between the President and the Armenian Catholicos Karekin II. It has been coordinated with OGI/IIC/TG.


Director
European Analysis

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E U R A

Office of European Analysis

27 May 1983

MEMORANDUM

Turkish Reaction to a meeting between the President and Armenian Apostolic Archbishop Karekin II

1. The Turkish government probably would not consider a meeting between the President and Archbishop Karekin to be particularly significant. Ankara has shown little interest in past meetings between Armenian church leaders and US officials, not even those involving the Patriarch of the Armenian Orthodox Church, who lives in Istanbul. We believe that the Turkish leadership historically has differentiated between Armenian religious leaders -- who have traditionally condemned anti-Turkish Armenian terrorism -- and other Armenian leaders, many of whom have taken ambiguous positions on the terrorists' actions. The Turks probably know that the Archbishop -- who resides in Beirut -- is a strong advocate of Lebanese unity and independence. They are likely to assume that his meeting with the President would focus on these issues.

2. The Turks are, however, unusually sensitive now about the Armenian problem. Armenian terrorists have assassinated more than 25 Turkish diplomats in recent years.

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The Armenian question has, moreover, become a factor in the Cyprus dispute. Ankara claims that the Greek Cypriots are harboring Armenian terrorists, while Athens and Nicosia heatedly deny the charge. All this suggests a slight possibility that the Turks might misconstrue the President's meeting with Karekin II. If the Turks did take the visit as an affront, they would be unlikely to do more than express their concern through diplomatic channels.

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